Import of wheat

2302. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to import wheat;

(b) if so, what is the reason thereof and whether it is also a fact that Government have not increased the minimum support price for farmers;

(c) whether Government are aware that the agricultural policy has issued through PDS, less money for farmers and higher price for consumer; and

(d) if so, what is the reaction of Government on the above issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Keeping in view the lower level of stocks of wheat in the central pool, low level of procurement of wheat on account of high ruling open market prices, lower than the targeted production of wheat, negative market sentiments, low market arrivals and more active participation by private traders and in order to augment the stocks of wheat in the Central Pool to ensure food security and also to keep a check on open market prices of wheat, a decision was taken to import 35 lakh tonnes of wheat. A further decision to import 4 lakh tonnes of wheat has been taken.

(b) There have been increases in Minimum Support Prices of foodgrains every year. The Government also decided to give an incentive bonus of Rs. 50 per quintal over and above the MSP for wheat procured in Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2006-07.

(c) and (d) The present policy of the Government for carrying out price support operations through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State Agencies ensures remunerative prices to farmers. The Central Issue Prices (CIPs) of rice and wheat under TPDS have remained unchanged since July, 2000 for BPL households. For APL households, CIPs of rice and wheat remained unchanged since July, 2002 which is beneficial for the farmers.